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## Changes to the Occupational English Test

All doctors who practise medicine in the UK must have the necessary knowledge of English to communicate effectively so they don't put the safety of their patients at risk.

From 6 February 2018, in addition to the academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS), the GMC started routinely accepting another test of English language called the **Occupational English Test** – medicine profession version (OET). Its introduction was designed to increase flexibility for doctors keen to work in the UK, while maintaining a requirement for a high standard of English.

In September, OET introduced a number of updates to their test. This included bringing in a new results portal, an updated scoring system and test content more reflective of situations doctors encounter at work. The updated scoring system will apply to results published on or after **2 October 2018**.

### Changes to the test content

It is intended that the level of English being tested hasn't changed. OET has published some [frequently asked questions](#).

### Changes to the scoring system

OET have introduced a numerical score. For a period of time candidates will receive a numerical score (0-500) alongside their alphabetical score (A to E). Eventually OET will stop producing alphabetical scores.

The new results scale is intended to give candidates a clearer picture of their test performance and help them to better understand how far they might be from their desired score.

## Test requirements

In order to meet the GMC's language requirements, doctors need to achieve at least a grade 'B' in each of the four domains tested in the OET in a single sitting. The GMC has not changed any of its requirements in light of the updates to OET and the same grades are required.

With the new scoring system, the required numerical equivalent to **at least a grade 'B'** will be a score of **at least 350** in each domain.

This means tribunals should only routinely accept a numerical score of 350 or higher in each of the four test domains. Eg Scores of 370 in reading, 350 in listening, 380 in writing and 340 in speaking would not meet the GMC's language requirements.

### Band Scores

OET Results - alphabetical	OET Results - numerical	IELTS Band Score
<b>A</b>	<b>450 - 500</b>	<b>8.0 - 9.0</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>350 - 440</b>	<b>7.0 - 7.5</b>
<b>C+</b>	<b>300 - 340</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>200 - 290</b>	<b>5.5 - 6.0</b>
<b>D / E</b>	<b>0 – 190</b>	<b>Less than 5.5</b>

## Directing an English language assessment

Currently, when directing an English language assessment, a tribunal will direct a doctor to undergo an 'English language assessment'. Details of the tests acceptable to the GMC are in the glossaries to the restrictions banks and should be identified to the doctor. The doctor can then choose which test to sit and the GMC will reimburse the cost of that test. Doctors are required to submit their evidence to the GMC within 90 days.

The glossaries to the restrictions banks have been updated to reflect that in OET doctors are now required to achieve **at least a grade 'B' or a numerical score of at least 350 in each testing area.**

If you have any questions please contact us.

Kind regards

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